

And what is that something? It is the preposition “ἐκ” – “ek” plus the noun “πυρὸς” – “pyros.”

The preposition “ek” plus the ablative singular of “pyro,s” this prepositional phrase is translated “out from the fire.”

So our translation of verse 23a, “**On the other hand, save others** (negative reversionistic believers) **by snatching them out from the fire,**”

For unbelievers, it is obvious that salvation is being snatched away from the eternal lake of fire.

But for the believer what is their fire? The surety of misery that comes to a believer who is in reversionism, doing all the things that we would wish we could do from the human viewpoint.

So reversionism is the fire of trouble for them; a maturing believer recognizes the symptoms and takes action as by the rescuing imperative, the first imperative.

But how is a believer involved in rescuing another believer from the fire of reversionism?

By living the spiritual life as an example. Happiness in the face of misery: their misery, your happiness, a relaxed mental attitude under adversity.

There is no life that is a greater example than living the Christian way of life in the eyes of someone who is miserable. You don't even have to say anything. It's obvious.

Another way to rescue is by speaking truth. Speaking doctrine when the opportunity presents itself without haranguing. And, of course, let's not forget one of the most powerful of all weapons under these circumstances: the power of prayer for their recovery.

But for the apostate believer, inundated with falsehood and false teachers as Jude has described them throughout this epistle, these are the ones who may be moving toward reversionism, and so they must be rescued from temporal discipline for that drift.

In this case, fire is metaphorical. This is a more difficult rescue as they progress deeper and deeper and deeper into reversionism, which is what false doctrine does.

So there is no time to lose. Now in the phrase, “snatching them out of the fire,” Jude has in mind an Old Testament passage. It is Zechariah 3:2.

**Zechariah 3:2: “The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” (NASB)**

Zechariah was referring to Israel in a different dispensation than we are currently residing in. That was the dispensation of Israel. We live in the dispensation of the church, so there are some differences here.

Israel was a client nation, and this is referring to the nation as a whole, whereas Jude is referring to believers individually.

This is still pertinent to us because there is a parallel between Israel in this case and the one who is falling into reversionism.

Zechariah is referring to God's people in that dispensation being delivered or rescued from the Babylonian captivity to return to the land of Israel. In 586 BC, Judah was destroyed by the Chaldean army of Nebuchadnezzar.

Zechariah is talking about God's rescue accomplished by His grace for an apostate people.

They went to Babylon in 586 BC, a nation that had rejected God in every way. But in Babylon, over a period of 70 years, which was the period of the captivity, men like Daniel set the example of a spiritual life for Israel, remaining true to the Lord amidst heathen, idolatrous Babylon, which is exactly what Jude is exhorting you to do: remaining true to the Lord in the midst of pure apostasy all around you.

Daniel and a remnant did not succumb to Chaldean idolatry or worship of the Chaldean king.

So, in Israel there was a remnant that was spiritually renewed and rescued, ready to return to the land, and the Lord blessed that remnant with such a return under Zerubbabel in 516 BC by the decree of Cyrus the Great of Persia, and Daniel had great influence on him.

Cyrus, of course, the year before, conquered the Chaldeans, and his empire was even greater than Chaldea, and God used this very man as the instrument to rescue Israel. He decreed in 516 BC that Zerubbabel and 50,000 Jews return.

So, in Israel there was that remnant who were spiritually renewed and rescued and returned in 516 BC.

Terrible discipline had been meted out on Israel 70 years earlier in the form of that Babylonian captivity.

But with spiritual advance in the souls of some of those people, through men like Daniel and some other prophets (Ezekiel was also taken captive), some others were rescued by the grace of God.

That is Jude's message to you in verse 23.

One word, “*sozo*.” Don't ever forget it. It is your obligation. It is your privilege. It's just done in a different way.

But there's still another aspect to this rescue in verse 23 and it must be done with great care, very, very carefully, because, you see, the advancing believer, who in this case is the rescuer, must not become affected by association with the reversionist.

The believer, in association with a reversionist, can get burned in the fire of his own discipline.

It is entirely possible for the rescuer, for the one who is riding to the rescue of the reversionist, to be influenced by that reversionism, especially when it's in your area of weakness, i.e., when things look attractive, or when the person that's involved is someone you are very close to.

So the rescuer may need rescuing himself and that is the conclusion of the final lines of verse 23.

**“Some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”**

In verse 23, the verb for “have mercy” is the present active imperative of the verb “ἐλεέω” – “*eleéō*,” which means “to have mercy.”

“To have mercy” is a good translation but it also means “to have compassion” or “to pity.”

This is the attitude of a maturing believer toward the apostates, toward the reversionists who are locked into false doctrine and reversionism.

Unlike the convincing of a wavering believer in verse 22, these apostates are utterly polluted and hardened against the truth.

The only recourse here is for the believer to have mercy on them or to pity them. That doesn't sound like much of an offense, but in those cases where you have no choice, where there is no convincing to be done, then “*eleéō*” is your next course of action.

Have mercy, pity them. This would indicate, of course, that some believers are beyond conviction, beyond refuting or convincing by you of their apostasy, which is a sad thing. It is something to be pitied. The only conviction for them will be the difficult circumstances they receive.

1. With regard to verse 23, the next best response after the refuting, which would not work in this case, the next best response by the maturing believer is to show compassion and pity on the reversionist.
2. That means without antagonism toward that person. Pity and antagonism are mutually exclusive. If you find yourself antagonistic toward someone like that, then you are not fulfilling the mandate to have mercy or pity.
3. This is the attitude that the advancing believer must express toward the apostasy and sin of the reversionist. Having mercy and pity is part of impersonal love and you need to be able to operate with impersonal love under these circumstances.
4. Condemnation of their reversionism is not the means of changing their and actions. You don't argue nose to nose with them and tell them they're idiots and they're fools. That is what verse 23 mandates that you not do.

So this should help you in how you approach people like that, especially if they're adult children, they are going to rebel against that.

5. The grace of God is what must be emphasized. You'd better be grace-oriented. Because you can't know your destiny in the plan of God without grace orientation.

However, with that mercy, compassion, and pity, you have the prepositional phrase, and this also must be exercised. “ἐν” – “en” “φόβος – “*phóbos*.”

“En” is the preposition, “*phóbos*” is the object. It is translated “with fear.”

This must be exercised in conjunction with your mercy, compassion, and pity.

See, the maturing believer must approach the apostate with fear. That's the translation, “with fear.” You must approach having mercy and pity with fear.

“*Phóbos*” here is caution. You must approach having mercy and pity, but with caution.

Have compassion for the state of the reversionist. Pity their life of frustration, anger, bitterness, all sorts of mental attitude sins, the emptiness of chasing materialism, the emptiness of chasing their tails.

1. Persuading and refuting their apostasy can be dangerous for the growing believer.
2. Remember, in this case in verse 23, refutation is not your mandate. But if you go after them, and they're in that reversionism, there's a danger.
3. What is the danger? Arguments can sway both ways. Let's face it, religion and humanism can be seductive. They may out-argue you or provide certain temptations that fall right into your area of weakness.
4. Perhaps their reversionism and sin is contagious. It may excite your area of weakness.
5. Don't get caught up in the reversionistic lifestyle during your association.

6. Such persons may have more of an effect on you for evil than you have on them for good. It's a two-way street. So often the one caught in reversionism is not going to quietly listen to you refute them. They're coming back at you. You may not have advanced far enough.
7. You don't have to participate in the apostate's attitudes or activities to show compassion for their reversionism.
8. You don't get involved with their attitudes and activities to try to turn them back to the Christian life. In other words, you don't party with the reversionist just to gain a hearing.
9. That's the meaning of having mercy or compassion coupled with fear or caution. Present truth to the reversionist but be careful. You don't dip to their level to convict or to convince.

This caution, this fear in association, is verified by the final phrase of verse 23.

“hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.”

Next, we have the present active participle of the verb “μισέω” – “*miséō*.”

1. Of course, “*miséō*” does mean to hate, but not a mental attitude sin of hate. It's not what “*miséō*” means in this case. It's an attitude, but it's not a mental attitude sin.
2. The mental attitude sin of hate can only snowball into bitterness and into implacability. That kind of attitude keeps a believer out of fellowship and moving toward his own reversionistic attitude and misery.
3. It does not mean to hate the reversionist in the sense of anger, bitterness, or any other sinful attitude or talk. Pretty soon you've got an incredible gossip going. That does no good. There's no mercy or compassion in that.
4. It's the attitude toward the pollution of sin and reversionism in the apostate. One is an attitude of compassion; the other is the attitude of hate directed toward the same person.
5. The believer is to have compassion and impersonal love for the person in that state of reversionism.

6. The compassion does not change the believer's detesting of the sin itself, whatever it may be in reversionism.
7. To personally attack the reversionist because you detest their sin is absolutely the wrong approach.
8. That would violate the compassion and mercy side of your attitude if you detest the person for their sin. A personal attack would violate the compassion and mercy side of your attitude toward that person, toward the reversionist.
9. Speaking against sin is not wrong, but you better be careful you're not legalistic about the way you do it. Personal attack of another is wrong. That violates compassion, pity, mercy.

Have mercy on them, but detest the falsehood so you won't fall for it.